

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 050372

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:MASS, MPOL, NATO, PO

SUBJECT:FRG CONTRIBUTION TO PORTUGUESE NATO BRIGADE

REF: USNATO 958 AND 1137

1. WE MAY HAVE ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS THE GERMANS
ON THE TANKS FOR PORTUGAL BEFORE THEY MAY REACH A FIRM
DECISION ON MARCH 9. THE PORTUGUESE REQUEST CIRCULATED
IN NATO ON JANUARY 12 INCLUDED 5 M48A5 TRAINING TANKS
(IN EFFECT COVERED BY THE U.S. LOAN) AND 17 M48A5 FOR THE
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AIR TRANSPORTABLE BRIGADE. THE PORTUGUESE HAVE BEEN
TRAINING FOR SIX MONTHS ON THE MODEL A5 TANKS AND, AS
LISBON 1268 POINTS OUT, EARLIEST POSSIBLE DELIVERY OF
ADDITIONAL TANKS IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.

2. IT APPEARS THAT THE FRG WISHES TO PROVIDE THE 17
TANKS FOR THE MOBILE BRIGADE BUT AT THE LEAST EXPENSE

TO ITS OWN BUDGET, AND FOR THIS REASON HAS EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT UPGRADING THE GERMAN MODEL A2 TANKS WITH BOTH A 105 GUN WITH NEW FIRE CONTROL AND WITH A DIESEL POWER SYSTEM WOULD COST MORE THAN IS JUSTIFIED IN TERMS OF QUOTE DESIRABLE CAPABILITIES UNQUOTE FOR THIS BRIGADE.

3. WE HOPE THE GERMAN DECISION WILL BE TO CONFIRM AN

OFFER OF 17 TANKS, INCLUDING THE 105 GUN/FIRE CONTROL AND THE DIESEL POWER SYSTEM. THE FIRST STEP IS FOR THE GERMANS TO BE CONVINCED THAT ALL THESE FEATURES ARE INDEED DESIRABLE FOR THE PORTUGUESE BRIGADE TANKS. SHAPE MAY HAVE FURTHER VIEWS ON THIS POINT TO CONVEY TO THE GERMANS. IF THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED, THE QUESTIONS CAN THEN BE CONSIDERED OF WHETHER ALL THESE MODIFICATIONS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED IN GERMANY, OR THROUGH GERMAN CONTRACTING ABROAD, HOW SOON, AT WHAT COST, AND WHETHER THE GERMANS ARE WILLING TO BUDGET THE FULL AMOUNTS TO DO THIS OR WOULD LOOK FOR SOME EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE.

4. WE HOPE THE FRG WILL CONSIDER VERY SERIOUSLY THE FUNDING OF THE COMPLETE CONVERSION OF THE TANKS TO THE MODEL A5 AND THAT THEY WILL BE WILLING TO FINANCE THIS CONVERSION ABROAD IF NOT ENTIRELY IN GERMANY.

5. FOR BONN. THE EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO AGAIN APPROACH APPROPRIATE WORKING-LEVEL OFFICIALS PRIOR TO THE MARCH 9 POLICY MEETING TO MAKE ABOVE POINTS, MAKING CLEAR AT SAME TIME THAT WE DO NOT RPT NOT WANT FRG TO CONSTRUE THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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REQUEST AS DETRACTING IN ANY WAY FROM THE TOP PRIORITY WE GIVE TO PARTICIPATION IN THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS CONSORTIUM FOR PORTUGAL.

6. FOR LISBON: GOP MAY WISH TO CONVEY TO THE GERMANS HOW STRONGLY IT FEELS ABOUT GETTING MODEL A5 TANK.

7. FOR USNATO: QUESTIONS IN PARA 3 OF NATO 1137 BEING ANSWERED SEPARATELY.

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